



# KRC TIMES

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### PERSPECTIVE

Haters will broadcast your failures, but whisper your success.

### Manipur civil services exam rescheduled after printing error discovered minutes before start

**IMPHAL**

The Manipur Public Service Commission has rescheduled two papers of the Civil Services Combined Competitive (Mains) Examination, 2022, after discovering a printing error just moments before candidates were due to begin writing.

Paper-IV (General Studies-III) and Paper-V (General Studies-IV), originally scheduled for November 9, will now be held on November 22, 2025 (Saturday). The error came to light when invigilators opened the sealed question paper cover in the examination hall and found a mismatch between the heading on the paper and its actual content.

The commission clarified that the printing mistake by the secured press could not be detected earlier due to strict confidentiality protocols. "No official from the MPSC is allowed to see the Question Papers to keep full confidentiality, and the question paper is opened only in front of the candidates in the examination hall," the notification stated.

The commission emphasised that maintaining confidentiality remains paramount, even if it means being unable to spot printing errors beforehand. "It is the endeavour of the MPSC to keep full confidentiality even at the risk of being not able to detect errors in the printing of the question papers, as confidentiality is paramount," officials said.

**WHO SAID WHAT**

**Hearfelt appreciation to the people and leadership of Bhutan for the reverent welcome accorded to the Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha from India. These relics symbolise the timeless message of peace, compassion and harmony. The teachings of Lord Buddha are a sacred link between our two nations' shared spiritual heritage.**  
~ Narendra Modi, PM India

## Assam Expands Food Subsidy Scheme; 'Anna Seva' to Offer Dal, Sugar, Salt at Rs100 from Jan 1

**GUWAHATI**

The Assam government on Monday expanded the Anna Seva Scheme to include three essential items, dal, sugar, and salt, at subsidised rates, benefiting nearly 70 lakh families under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

The scheme was formally rolled out across the state's 33,000 fair-price shops, where special meetings were held to mark the occasion with the participation of beneficiaries, ministers, MLAs and officials.

The central launch event at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati was led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who said the move reaffirmed the government's commitment to "inclusive development".

"From now on, every household with a ration card will get dal, sugar, and salt at subsidised rates," Dr. Sarma said.

Under the scheme, 1 kg dal is sold at Rs 69, sugar at Rs 38, and salt at Rs 10, totalling Rs 117 per month. However, starting January 1, the combined price will be reduced to Rs 100 per household per month.

"Instead of paying Rs 69 and



worrying about Rs 1 change, we decided that from January 1, you can simply pay Rs 100 and get dal, sugar, and salt," the Chief Minister

added, drawing applause from the audience. Dr. Sarma also announced an additional measure to ease the burden of LPG prices for

poor households. "For those with the Ujala card, gas costs Rs 550, but without it, Rs 950-Rs 1,000. To make it easier, we will deposit Rs 250 di-

rectly into your account to buy gas," he said.

In his address, Sarma highlighted the shift from traditional welfare distribution models to direct benefit transfers (DBT), crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's governance reforms. "When Modi ji made bank accounts mandatory, many wondered why. But when the poor started receiving gas subsidies and COVID relief directly in their accounts, we understood his foresight," he noted. Drawing a contrast with past regimes, the Chief Minister said earlier governments distributed items like dhuti, blankets, and bedsheets once in a few years; "a practice that offered little long-term benefit".

"Earlier, people had to attend meetings and fight over who would get what. Today, every rupee reaches the poor directly," he said.

Ending his speech on a populist note, Sarma promised that his government would continue to strengthen household welfare schemes. "We have given you rice, dal, sugar, salt, Orunodoi, and Nijut Moina. Next, if you make us win the election, we will give 1 litre mustard oil. Then all household worries will end," he declared.

## Modi shares Scindia's article highlighting Northeast as India's 'forward face'



**NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 9 shared an article by Union Minister for the Development of North Eastern Region, Jyotiraditya Scindia, who described the Northeast as India's "forward face" and its "natural gateway" to Southeast Asia.

The article, shared by the Prime Minister on X, outlines how the region — referred to by Scindia as Ashtalakshmi — has seen a remarkable transformation through improved air connectivity, highways, and other infrastructure initiatives.

Scindia recently toured Meghalaya and Assam, where he inaugurated and laid foundation stones for several key projects. During his visit, he said he "observed nature at its most authentic" and was deeply moved by the "breathtaking beauty" of the Northeast, matched only by "the warmth, simplicity, and indomitable spirit of its people."

Highlighting the government's focus on inclusive growth, Scindia credited the region's progress to what he called Prime Minister Modi's "vision of transforming the Northeast into a true growth engine



of Bharat — rooted in tradition, powered by innovation, and strengthened by the resilience of its people."

During his Meghalaya visit, the minister inaugurated the Rs 233-crore Integrated Sohra Tourism Circuit under the PM-DevINE initiative and toured the Mushroom Development Centre in Upper Shillong, which he described as "a quiet revolution in the heart of Meghalaya," where scientists and locals are working together to improve rural livelihoods.

In Assam, Scindia inaugurated the North Eastern Science and Technology (NEST) Cluster at IIT Guwahati and laid foundation stones for projects worth Rs 635 crore, aimed at strengthening research and innovation in the region.

The Prime Minister's Office, while sharing Scindia's piece, said the minister's reflections "capture the beauty and dynamism" of the Northeast and its growing role as India's bridge to Southeast Asia.

Scindia's message aligns with the government's broader goal of positioning the Northeast not as a distant frontier, but as a vital, forward-looking region integral to India's growth story.

## Nagaland is a land of courage and bravery: Om Birla

**DIMAPUR**

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla termed Nagaland a land of courage, bravery, and valour, and a place of bold and fearless people.

Speaking at a felicitation program organized by the Sri Marwari Sammelan Dimapur at Lions Club Dimapur shortly after his arrival in Dimapur on Sunday afternoon, Birla said, "If we wish to realize the dream of a developed India, we must work in alignment with the culture and work ethic of Nagaland, a spirit that deeply connects to the idea of an Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)."

Birla will inaugurate the 22nd annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region Zone-III in Kohima on Monday.

He said new doors of development have opened in the northeastern states over the past decade, adding that there is still immense potential for further growth.

Birla noted that the people of Nagaland have a creative spirit, innovative thinking, and the courage to work hard even in the face of adversity — qualities that inspire all.

He said Nagaland's natural beauty and environment will attract more domestic and international tourists in the coming years.



Stressing that everyone must focus on developing their workplace, Birla called for attracting industries, investors, and agricultural entrepreneurs, as well as promoting tourism, because India's diversity in tourism is unmatched anywhere in the world.

He hoped that through everyone's collective effort, both Nagaland and India would continue to progress.

Stating that India's true strength lies in its diversity, its many cultures, cuisines, attires, and traditions, he said,

"Despite these differences, it is democracy that unites us."

Birla lauded the Marwari community, saying that although they have come from different states to the northeastern region, they embraced the cultural heritage of each state through their determination, hard work, and self-confidence, wherever they settled.

He added that, driven by a spirit of service, sacrifice, and commitment, the community is always the first to step forward in times of disaster, crisis, or challenge.

## Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha advocates to take TripuraInfo Mega Quiz 2025 to rest of the country

**BISWADEEP GUPTA**

**AGARTALA** :The prestigious TripuraInfo Mega Quiz 2025 commenced on Sunday on a deeply emotional note, as organizers and participants observed a minute's silence in memory of several eminent personalities who had been closely associated with the event and the TripuraInfo family over the years.

The TripuraInfo Mega Quiz 2025 was attended by Tripura Chief Minister Prof (Dr.) Manik Saha, who lauded the organizers for their continued efforts in promoting intellectual engagement through the annual event.

Sharing his thoughts, Dr. Saha said he was delighted to be part of such a grand quiz competition. "I have been attending this event for the last two years, and it's truly heart-warming to see so many enthusiastic participants," he remarked.

The tribute honored Pradip Datta Bhowmik, News Editor of a leading dai-



ly and a long-time supporter of the Quiz; Mrinmoy Chowdhury, partner of Kalika Jewellers, Agartala; Tapesh Debnath, a

renowned contractor from Shibnagar; Venerable Ramkrishna Das, a respected Buddhist monk and former student of

MBB College; and Late Jyotsna Debnath, mother of Jayanta Debnath.

Each of them had contributed significantly to the event's growth over the years, helping transform it into one of Tripura's most anticipated state-level quiz competitions. Their encouragement and association, the organizers said, remain deeply woven into the spirit of the event.

The presence of family members of the departed personalities added to the poignancy of the moment. The atmosphere turned solemn and reflective as participants, organizers, and audience members joined together in paying their respects.

With this moving gesture, the TripuraInfo family reaffirmed its commitment to carry forward the legacy, values, and vision of those who had helped shape the Mega Quiz into what it is today — a celebration of knowledge, camaraderie, and community spirit.

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## SINGING OUR SOULS AWAKE

A new trend is reportedly rocking young India called 'bhajan clubbing', in which Gen Z gathers in various spaces for sessions of singing and dancing to remixed devotional songs. Chai and buttermilk are to hand, not the liquor served in Western-style pubs and clubs. There are diyas, candles, incense sticks, and flowers to create a pleasant atmosphere. The young dress up, or don't, depending on the occasion, clap along, and sing to guitars and drums. The music is modern, but the words are old, including mahamantras like 'Hare Rama, Hare Rama'.

If we look, we'll see that this movement was growing organically, with important contributions to the 'vibe' from singers like Shankar Mahadevan, Kailash Kher, Jubin Nautiyal, and a score more. The happy-clappy satsang and naamkirtan culture already in place was made more modern. The electric atmosphere during festivals like Navratri, Mahashivratri, and Janmashtami at temples, garba grounds, and in popular ashrams also fostered this development. Purists may cavil, but doesn't it sound perfectly natural for a singing, dancing nation? The young have found their own, blessedly free expression of belief, blending fun and faith.

I welcome this trend with all my heart and wish it had happened in my youth. It would have been grounding, energising, and expressive of the Ananda or joy, which is the driving principle of this upbeat faith. I would not have been conditioned to be a 'coconut'—brown outside and white inside. I mourn that I belong to the cheated urban generation that was denied Sanskrit. I was taught French instead. No learning is wasted, true, but our access to and understanding of our heritage should not have been removed either. I am very thankful that the two terrible fault lines in our culture—caste and gender—are being repaired. I regret that along the way, they 'threw the baby out with the bathwater'.

This brings back a question I was pointedly asked when I began writing about religion over twenty-five years ago, thanks to the newspaper editors who took a wild chance on me. Prior to that, growing up had been complicated. My mother, the believer, was long dead, my father was basically irreligious, and I was swamped by proud atheists. They were decent people, bright and well-spoken, whose one blind spot was faith. My friends included the 'Khan Market gang' and 'Lutyens gang' that ridiculed Indian religion. I was taken aback by the underlying self-hate when people breezily said things like, "Ram was a wimp". My authentic self—a low-maintenance Hindu, maybe, but a Hindu nevertheless—was hidden from them. My faith became "the love that dare not speak its name".

But my cover was blown when I began writing about religion. I couldn't lie there, though I openly shared my doubts, queries, and critiques, drawing flak from traditionalists. All hell broke loose in my little world when I tried to explain the Hindu's visceral need for temples, headlined 'A House for Mr Vishwas'. 'Left-lib' friends told me sternly, "Renuka, you've become embarrassing," and scornfully demanded, "What's a column on religion doing in a newspaper?"

Wait, my peer group found me ridiculous, and was pressuring me to stop? It was a stark moment of choice. I chose God. A response came to me. "I think a newspaper could be compared to a farm," I said slowly. "The news pages bear staple crops like wheat and rice. The sports and feature pages grow spice and vegetable crops. The business pages are the mandi, the crop market. The editorial pages are orchards, with the fruit of thought."

"So, what's a faith column?" my friends repeated. Their tone had subtly shifted, as though processing the comparison. An answer lit up in my head. "A faith column is the kesar bagh," I said. "The 'saffron garden', as a garden of precious herbs is called. Its space may be smaller than that of the big crops. But if honestly tended, perhaps its scent may be able to enhance the quality of life." There was a long moment of silence, and I looked back steadily, for, in having to explain myself, I found I had clarified my own thoughts. Perhaps it was what we'd call "the Upanishadic reflex"—to respond with a plausible analogy. I wondered if, unrecognised by both parties, this pattern was so culturally entrenched over the millennia that even Macaulay could not fully uproot it. For they accepted the analogy, though they stuck to their disregard for faith.

We continued as friends, with the uncomfortable understanding that I walked a different path. I heard them tell others that I was "not really like that". Once, when I showed up for lunch at the Delhi Gymkhana Club with a tilak on my forehead because I'd stopped by the Yogmaya temple, my smart friends were horrified and icily asked why I'd turned into a sadhvi. By then, I'd grown past explaining and merely raised a 'So, sue me' eyebrow. Then one of them said, "She's not a sadhvi," and the moment passed.

I'd thought about life without the approval of the people I knew. It was fine, I'd realised, with growing excitement, for I was on a valid, if lone, personal journey in dialogue with the public. I had somehow arrived, stumbling, at the golden shore of a vast ocean, a fathomless treasure trove. It's me, the almost-outcast, who loves how Gen Z is making faith its own, combining music, devotion, and community. Sing and dance, dear people. Hari bol, with rightful joy.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

The first method for estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him.

- Niccolò Machiavelli

# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOUBLE VOTES? TECH-DRIVEN SIR 2.0 FOR ELECTORAL INTEGRITY



RAJEEV KUMAR

The SIR in Bihar faced strong criticism from political parties, leading the Supreme Court to direct the Election Commission of India (ECI) to draw lessons from it before undertaking a nationwide revision. The new exercise, called SIR 2.0, commenced this week, presenting itself as a paperless, people-friendly, and procedurally robust initiative.

With nearly one billion voter entries, a digital approach is not only inevitable but indispensable. The electoral roll is no longer a static, state-wise record but a dynamic national database whose precision directly defines the integrity of India's elections. However, questions about its credibility have already begun to surface.

This article examines the issue of double or multiple listings of a single voter, exemplified by the recent case of a voter in Bihar whose name appears in both the Bihar and West Bengal rolls. The duplication defeats the core purpose of the SIR and reflects procedural lapses rather than voter fraud. The problem affects countless citizens who relocate and unknowingly remain registered in more than one constituency—a situation the author has personally observed in several similar cases. A hanging sword remains suspended over voters' heads, unknowingly and unalarmed, mainly due to the Election Commission's high-handedness and administrative indifference.

Sound Legal Framework, Poor Enforcement

Under the Representation of the People (RP) Act, 1950, duplicate entries technically constitute a violation, though such lapses may not be intentional. Many law-abiding citizens, simply by shifting residence, inadvertently find themselves in breach of the Act through no fault of their own. The RP Act, 1950, defines the framework for maintaining the integrity of electoral rolls and preventing duplication.

Under Section 22(b), if a voter changes residence within the same constituency, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) should transpose the entry to the appropriate part of the roll. Section 22 concerns the inclusion of names in the electoral rolls. When a voter moves to another constituency, Section 23(2) governs inclusion in the new roll. It mandates that the ERO, if satisfied that the applicant is entitled to be registered, shall direct inclusion of the applicant's name in the new roll. The section further requires that if the applicant is al-

ready registered in the roll of another constituency, the concerned ERO must inform the officer of that constituency, who shall then strike off the applicant's name from that roll. Thus, a double vote exists mostly due to the inaction of electoral officials. In practice, double votes persist largely because electoral officials fail to act with the diligence and coordination required by law.

To ensure the uniqueness of every voter's registration, Sections 17 and 18 explicitly prohibit multiple registrations—no person may be listed in more than one constituency or more than once in the same constituency. Violations constitute an offence under electoral law. Duplication often occurs when a voter's name is added at a new place of residence but not simultaneously deleted from the previous one.

In essence, the Act places the primary responsibility on the EROs to ensure that transposition, inclusion, and deletion are carried out accurately, promptly, and simultaneously. This process is crucial in preventing duplicate registration and ensuring the credibility, transparency, and integrity of the national electoral database.

#### Procedural Flaws in Voter Duplication

The ECI has consolidated the above provisions related to change of residence and correction of voter details in Form 8, used for transposition or correction of entries. A change of address request may fall under four categories: (I) no change in constituency or polling station; (II) no change in constituency but a change in polling station; (III) change in constituency within the same state; and (IV) change in both constituency and state.

The most common causes of double entries occur in Type III and Type IV cases, where a voter either changes constituency within the same state or relocates to another state. The new entry may retain the same EPIC (Electors' Photo Identity Card) number or generate a new one. For example, a recent case in Bihar involved two entries with different EPIC numbers, while the author has observed several instances where both entries shared the same EPIC. In either case, the responsibility for not deleting the earlier entry rests squarely with the concerned Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), whose timely coordination and action are crucial to preventing duplication in the national electoral roll.

Another source of duplication arises when a voter misuses Form 6 for a change of residence, although it is meant for new

voter inclusion. As mandated under Section 19 of the RP Act, 1950, the form applies to those who have attained 18 years of age and are ordinarily resident in a constituency. It requires a declaration that the applicant is enrolling for the first time and is not registered elsewhere. However, voters shifting residence often conceal their existing registration, resulting in duplication. Such false declarations constitute a legal violation, with accountability shared by both the voter and the officials responsible for verification.

Technology in Place, Accountability Missing

The backbone of India's electoral roll is ECINet, a fully digital, nationwide system designed to assign each voter a unique EPIC number, ensuring a single verifiable entry per individual. With records of nearly one billion voters, ECINet can detect duplicates, flag inconsistencies, and enable corrections through authorised verification, maintaining a complete update history for traceability. Its voter search APIs can identify duplicate entries and generate alerts for review and deletion. With such capabilities, there is little justification for the continued existence of duplicate records.

Whether the SIR is paper-based or paperless, the real challenge lies in database accuracy and administrative responsiveness, as detection and deletion in a digital system can be instantaneous. Most duplicate entries arise from the failure to delete older records, whether linked to the same or a different EPIC number. This recurring issue reflects not a technological gap but an administrative lapse rooted in poor coordination and weak accountability within the electoral machinery.

Trust Through Technology  
SIR 2.0 must not degenerate into another bureaucratic ritual. The gaps are administrative, not technological. ECINet, already a robust digital system, should be strengthened through Aadhaar integration and updated Standard Operating Procedures. Before rollout, the electoral data must be cleaned, duplicates flagged, and deleted after verification.

With software-led validation, digital audit trails, and real-time corrections, the process can evolve into a trust revolution. The future SIRs may become unnecessary, as electoral rolls remain perpetually accurate, updated, and verifiable. Thus, in Digital India, technology must take charge of enforcing accountability—replacing bureaucratic inertia and complacency with

precision, transparency, and efficiency. ECINet must function as a reliable public utility with instant dispute resolution and continuous updates—shifting India from verification-by-ritual to verification-by-design, achieving SIR with Technology and Trust: A Model for the World.

The writer is a Tech-Education Policy Consultant, a former Professor of Computer Science at IIT Kharagpur, IIT Kanpur, BITS Pilani, and JNU, and a former Scientist at DRDO and DST

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

To paraphrase Voltaire, those who believe in absurdities can commit atrocities without ever thinking they're doing anything wrong.

What would happen if there were an omnipotent AI that was trained to believe absurdities?

Grok is the only AI that is laser-focused on truth.

~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur



## World Science Day for Peace and Development

### PROF RAMNI GUPTA

To highlight how Science can help us live better and more peacefully together UNESCO in 2001 started to celebrate World Science Day for Peace and Development on 10th November. This special day reminds us that science is not only about laboratories and discoveries but it is about people, progress, and the planet. The idea of this celebration came from the World Conference on Science, held in Budapest in 1999. Scientists and world leaders agreed that science should serve humanity and that people everywhere should understand how it affects their lives. The goal of observing this day is simple but powerful, to build a bridge between science and society, so that everyone can take part in discussions and decisions about our shared future. "Science is essential to peace-building because it offers practical, sustainable solutions to contemporary global challenges. By seeking responses to climate crises, epidemics and resource shortages, science helps to mitigate the root causes of many conflicts." Science touches every part of our lives as we can see from the clean water we drink to the mobile phones we use, from the medicines that heal us to the energy that lights our homes. This day celebrates those who work to make life better through science and reminds all of us to value facts, curiosity, and innovation. Despite the progress, science faces challenges that threaten its impact in terms of misinformation, unequal access and sometimes there are ethical issues. Solving these issues requires global cooperation. Scientists, educators, media, and citizens must work together to create a culture where knowledge is valued and shared responsibly. In that direction the 2025 theme

for observing this day is, "Trust, Transformation, and Tomorrow." The Science We Need for 2050, "that invites us to think deeply about how science can help us build a better future."

Trust, trust can be considered as The Heart of Science. Without it, people doubt facts, fear technology, and resist progress. In recent years, fake news, misinformation, and half-truths coming up frequently from various sources have created an atmosphere of disbelief in science. During the pandemic, for example, we saw both the power of science and the danger of mistrust. Scientists work with honesty, evidence, and open debate. However, the right message and what holds the facts and is true to the core sometimes gets lost in a noisy world. In recent times of social media with lightning fast communication channels it becomes vital to build public trust in science by bringing more transparency and inclusivity in the scientific achievements. That means it is required to explain how science works, sharing results openly, and involving communities in decision-making. Trust also grows when science doesn't distinguish on the basis of genders, cultures, and all regions have an equal voice so as to truly serve everyone.

Transformation is the Power of Change. Science has always been a force for transformation. Every invention beginning right from the wheel to the internet has impacted the lives. Recent discoveries like artificial intelligence, biotechnology, renewable energy, and quantum computing are reshaping our world faster than ever before. But not all change is good unless it benefits people and the planet as whole. True trans-

formation means using knowledge responsibly and maintaining sustainability. The goal of the Sciences, which is aimed, is not just progress, but progress with purpose. Transform the lives by creating technologies which can raise the living standards of being in a real way so as to reduce poverty, fight disease, protect nature, and improve lives. The science we need must balance innovation with compassion. Any breakthrough that we get out of scientific query must not be to divide, deteriorate but should uplift.

Tomorrow – The Science We Need for 2050. Thinking about "tomorrow" in science means thinking ahead to the year 2050, when the world will look very different. By then, there will likely be almost 10 billion people on Earth. Climate change, water scarcity, new diseases, and food insecurity will be major challenges. To meet these challenges, we need smart, sustainable, and ethical science.

Scientists are already exploring solutions that once sounded like science fiction like governments are looking into out of the box solutions towards issues where sustainability efforts are required to be put at the earliest. Some of these efforts are like going for Carbon-capture plants that pull greenhouse gases from the air, Fusion reactors that could provide clean, endless energy. Further AI-powered farming that grows more food with fewer resources. Synthetic biology that can design new medicines and materials. The science we need for 2050 is one that combines technology with humanity, one that helps us live in harmony with nature, not at its expense. No doubt with truth and transformation Science is on way to brighten our tomorrow. Science

can be a bridge for peace. While technology can be used for destruction, it can also bring nations together. International projects like the CERN Laboratory in Geneva or the International Space Station show what humanity can achieve when it works as one. During the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists around the world shared data and worked together to create vaccines in record time. It was proof that science, when used collectively and compassionately, can overcome even the gravest crises.

If we look at the Human Side of Science, Science isn't just about experiments and equations but it's about people. Behind every discovery is a story of imagination, struggle, and perseverance. These stories remind us that curiosity and creativity are as important as resources and technology. Science advances when ordinary people ask extraordinary questions. As Stephen Hawking said, "Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Be curious."

As we move toward 2050, science must remain open, honest, and human-centered. The future will demand new ways of thinking – not just in laboratories, but in classrooms, boardrooms, and communities. So the science we need will be transparent, so that people can see and trust how it works; Collaborative, so discoveries are shared globally; Ethical, so progress never comes at the cost of humanity. World Science Day for Peace and Development is more than a celebration. The 2025 theme, "Trust, Transformation, and Tomorrow," asks us to think about our shared responsibility on so that through the wonders of science we build a fairer, safer, and more sustainable world.

## Firearm licences for Assam's indigenous people from February 2026: Himanta Biswa Sarma

GUWAHATI

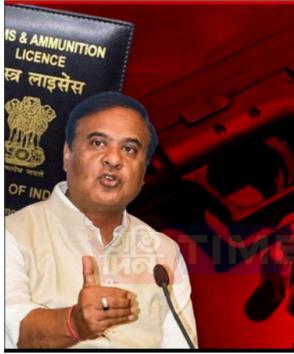
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that the state government will begin issuing the first batch of firearm licences to indigenous people living in "vulnerable and remote" areas from February 2026.

Sarma said the move aims to strengthen the sense of security among local residents in areas such as Dhubri, Morigaon, Barpeta, Nagaon and South Salmara-Mankachar, as well as localities like Rupahi, Dhing and Jania. The decision comes months ahead of the state assembly elections, likely to be held in March-April next year.

"We have received a lot of applications for firearm licences from indigenous people. The government will issue them very selectively," Sarma said at a press conference following a cabinet meeting in Guwahati.

The state cabinet had first decided on May 28 to allow firearm licences for residents of "vulnerable and remote" regions.

Sarma also claimed that Assam is un-



dergoing an "economic shift", with sections of the Muslim population becoming more prosperous. "I have noticed that demographic change has taken place rapidly in the economic aspect as well. In a way, a chapter of the Assamese people's surrender has begun," he said.

Citing data from 2001-2011, Sar-

ma stated that the Hindu population's growth rate is declining, while the Muslim population is increasing across every block in the state. He linked this with changes in land ownership patterns. "We are seeing that the sale of land from Hindus to Muslims is very high, while the vice versa is less," he said, adding that land transactions now require prior government permission under a directive issued last year.

Sarma clarified that the policy does not target any community. "A lot of Assamese and indigenous Muslims are involved, and we have no problem with that," he said, noting that the government is studying the changing patterns of wealth and land ownership.

On another major decision, the Chief Minister announced that the cabinet has approved the Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill, 2025, which will be tabled in the assembly on November 25.

The proposed law seeks to ban the practice of polygamy, with offenders facing up to seven years of rigorous imprisonment. Sarma said the offence would be cognisable and non-bailable.

The Bill, however, will not apply to Scheduled Tribe populations and areas under the Sixth Schedule such as the Bodoland Territorial Region, Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong. "If a Muslim has been living in a Sixth Schedule area prior to 2005, he will also be exempted," Sarma added.

The government will set up a compensation fund for women affected by polygamy. "We have decided to create a fund to support the victim women financially so that no woman faces hardship in her life," the Chief Minister said. Details regarding compensation and children's welfare will be outlined in the law's rules.

The new legislation will come into effect after notification following its passage in the assembly, without retrospective application.

Sarma said he plans to hold a separate briefing later to present data on the state's demographic and economic trends. "You can sometimes accept demographic change, but witnessing an economic shift signals complete destruction," he remarked.

## Assam Cabinet approves Rs 478 crore judicial township in Guwahati

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma chaired a crucial Cabinet meeting at Lok Sewa Bhawan on Sunday, November 9 where the Council of Ministers approved a series of landmark decisions spanning the judicial, educational, and social welfare sectors. One of the major highlights of the meeting was the green signal for the construction of a State-of-the-Art Judicial Township at Rangmahal, North Guwahati, as part of Phase I of the High Court Complex Development Project. The project, valued at Rs 478.78 crore, aims to build a comprehensive judicial hub featuring a High Court Building (G+4), Bar Building (G+6), and Office Building (G+6) — all interconnected by bridges to ensure functional integration and accessibility.

In a major push to promote entrepreneurship, the Cabinet approved the "Assam Startup and Innovation Policy 2025-30", envisioning Assam as one of India's leading innovation-driven states

over the next five years.

The policy, with a financial outlay of Rs 397 crore, introduces multi-stage funding mechanisms for startups, including: Ideation Grant: Up to Rs 10 lakh for concept validation and prototype development. Prototype Development Grant: Up to Rs 20 lakh for general/tech startups and Rs 40 lakh for deep-tech ventures. Seed Fund: Equity-based funding up to Rs 50 lakh per startup through the Assam Startup Seed Fund, with a 4% state equity cap. Venture Capital Fund: Growth capital up to Rs 10 crore per enterprise.

The Cabinet also approved the Assam Prohibition of Polygamy Bill, 2025, banning polygamous marriages in the state, except in Sixth Schedule areas.

The bill seeks to protect women from emotional and financial distress caused by polygamous practices and proposes compensation and legal protection for victims. Officials described the move as a step toward "streamlining society" and eliminating socially regressive customs.

## Singer Zublee Baruah records statement before SIT in Zubeen Garg case

GUWAHATI

Jublee Baruah appeared before the SIT at CID headquarters to record her statement in the investigation concerning late singer Zubeen Garg. Baruah expressed her emotions about Zubeen Garg and the investigation's progress but did not disclose details of her statement. She clarified she hasn't received further summons and emphasized waiting for the SIT's charge report for more clarity.

Popular Assamese singer Zublee Baruah appeared before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) at the CID headquarters in Guwahati on Sunday, November 9 where she reportedly recorded her statement in connection with the ongoing probe related to the late singer Zubeen Garg.

After coming out of the CID office, an emotional Zublee Baruah briefly spoke to the media and shared her thoughts about Zubeen Garg and the continuing investigation.

When asked whether she would be called again by the SIT, Zublee replied that she had not yet received any further summons.

"We will have to wait for the SIT's charge report," she said.

Speaking about the financial management angle being probed, Zublee clarified, "Zubeen Da's management was handled by Siddharth Sharma. The same management worked with me too. In my case, no irregularities have been found so far. If anything wrong has happened in Zubeen Da's case, it is for the SIT to look into."

The singer also made a heartfelt appeal to fans regarding the recent piracy of Zubeen Garg's works, saying, "Please don't indulge in piracy. If you truly love Zubeen da, don't pirate his movie."

## Centre Holds Two-Day Talks with Kuki-Zo Groups in Delhi on Demand for Union Territory Status



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

**NEW DELHI:** In a key political development, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) held a two-day round of talks with Kuki-Zo armed groups under the Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement on November 6 and 7, focusing on the community's long-standing demand for Union Territory status with a Legislative Assembly.

The discussions took place in New Delhi, with delegations from the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the United People's Front (UPF), led by senior lead-

ers of both umbrella bodies. The Centre was represented by A.K. Mishra, Advisor (Northeast) to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Sources said the meetings reviewed the existing ground situation in Manipur and explored possible political and administrative frameworks to address the aspirations of the Kuki-Zo community.

The Kuki-Zo groups, which have been in a truce with the government under the SoO pact since 2008, have consistently maintained that a separate administrative arrangement is essential to ensure peace, security, and political representation for their people in Manipur.

Officials described the talks as part of an ongoing engagement aimed at finding a negotiated and lasting solution to the issues concerning the hill districts and the Kuki-Zo population. Further rounds of discussion are expected in the coming weeks.

## CEM Debolal Gorolasa calls for preventive action after NIT Silchar students' tragic death

HAFLONG

Debolal Gorolasa, CEM, Dima Hasao in Assam, on Sunday evening stressed on preventive measures after three students met tragic death.

A heartbreaking incident at Bahkol (Buolsol) Waterfall in Lower Bousol, Harangajao, has claimed the lives of three young students from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Silchar.

The deceased have been identified as Radhika (19) from Bihar, Sarvakritika (20) from Uttar Pradesh, and Sauhard Rai (20) from Uttar Pradesh.

Expressing deep sorrow over the tragedy, Chief Executive Member (CEM) of Dima Hasao Autonomous Council, Debolal Gorolasa, visited the site on Sunday to assess the situation and meet those involved in the recovery operation.

"Today, I visited Lower Buolsol, Harangajao, the site of the tragic incident where three stu-



dents of NIT Silchar lost their lives. During the visit, I met with the local residents of Buolsol as well as officials from NIT Silchar to understand the circumstances surrounding the unfortunate event. The local people expressed their grief and shared details of the situation, while the NIT officials discussed the steps being taken to support the affected families and ensure the safety of students in the future. It was a somber yet important visit to convey solidarity and to em-

phasize the need for preventive measures so that such incidents do not occur again," Gorolasa said in a statement on Sunday evening.

According to reports, the three students drowned while visiting the picturesque waterfall on Saturday.

Their bodies were recovered on Sunday by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team in coordination with local authorities in Dima Hasao.

The Superintendent of Police

and the District Commissioner of Dima Hasao have been commended for their tireless rescue and recovery efforts. Further formalities are currently underway.

The incident has reignited discussions about the need for stronger safety protocols and preventive measures at rivers, waterfalls, and other vulnerable tourist locations in the hill district.

Locals and officials alike have called for clear signage, safety warnings, and restricted access during periods of high water flow to prevent similar tragedies.

The entire NIT Silchar community and residents of Dima Hasao mourn the loss of three bright, young lives.

Prayers and condolences continue to pour in for the bereaved families as the district administration works to ensure such a devastating incident is never repeated.

## Shillong-Dawki Road construction turns Umngot River polluted, NHIDCL fined

GUWAHATI

The Umngot River, once known for its crystal-clear waters and considered Asia's cleanest, is facing serious environmental stress due to ongoing construction along the JICA-funded Shillong-Dawki Road.

The 90-km project, executed by the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), has led to widespread dumping of excavated soil and construction debris into the river and its tributaries, turning the waters muddy and threatening the livelihoods of local communities that depend on tourism.

An inspection by the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MSPCB) on November 3 found multiple violations of environmental



norms along the project corridor.

The four-member team, which included senior MSPCB officials and the Assistant Commissioner of East Khasi Hills, observed extensive excavation and disposal of earth without proper containment or stabilization.

Unregulated sand washing and mechanical operations near streams were increasing muddiness in the

Umngot and Mynsong rivers.

Two mobile crushers were also found operating without consent, worsening soil erosion and sediment runoff.

Following the inspection, MSPCB imposed a fine of Rs 15 lakh on NHIDCL, directing the company to pay within 15 days as environmental compensation.

The board also required a detailed report on the causes of pollution, corrective measures taken, and steps to prevent further contamination, warning that failure to comply could lead to additional penalties or suspension of project activities.

Local stakeholders have expressed strong concern over the damage. Alan West Kharkongor, President of the Meghalaya Rural Tourism Forum, stressed that development must not come at the cost of

the environment.

He noted that the Prime Minister had once referred to the Umngot River as a national pride and called for day-to-day monitoring, regular reporting, and strict enforcement of environmental safeguards.

The Tourism Society of Darrang Elaka also raised complaints that NHIDCL had ignored repeated warnings from local communities.

Environmentalists and residents have warned that if unregulated construction and debris disposal continue, the Umngot River could suffer permanent ecological damage, affecting both its scenic value and the tourism-dependent economy.

The MSPCB has pledged to continue monitoring and enforcing rules to prevent further damage, stressing that development and conservation must go together.

## Tourism in Mizoram sees surge, over 1.27 lakh visitors recorded in August-September

AIZAWL

Mizoram saw a significant rise in tourism with 1,27,458 visitors in August and September 2025, marking a milestone in its tourism sector. The majority of tourists were domestic, with 1,25,250 local visitors, while 2,208 were foreign, indicating Mizoram's growing international appeal. Aizawl District emerged as the most-visited area, hosting 112 foreign tourists, highlighting its role as a key destination in Mizoram.

Mizoram has witnessed a significant rise in tourism, with over 1.27 lakh tourists visiting the state during August and September 2025, according to the latest data released by the Mizoram Tourism Department.

The report revealed that a total of 1,27,458 tourists visited the state during this two-month period. Out of these, 1,25,250 were local and domestic visitors,



while 2,208 were foreign tourists, highlighting Mizoram's growing popularity among both Indian and international

travellers. In September alone, 128 accommodation units across 11 districts submitted reports of

tourist arrivals. Aizawl District topped the list, hosting 112 foreign tourists through 59 registered establishments, making it the most-visited district.

Lawngtlai District also recorded a notable number of international visitors. Department figures showed that 1,250 foreign tourists visited Mizoram in August, followed by 407 in September, the majority of whom were from Myanmar's Rakhine State. Key entry and exit points for tourists included Lengpui Airport (LLP counter), Security FRO in Mamit District, and border points such as Kanhmum, Bairabi, and Vairengte in Kolasib District, along with Sairang Railway Station. The Tourism Department further reported that most foreign travellers to Mizoram during this period were from Myanmar, Israel, Japan, and the United States.

Officials believe the steady rise in tourist footfall reflects Mizoram's increasing appeal as a destination for nature, culture, and adventure enthusiasts, with efforts underway to further improve connectivity and hospitality infrastructure.

## Tripura Traffic Police Crack Down on Modified Bike Silencers; Over 400 Destroyed in Special Drive



KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

**AGARTALA:** The Tripura Traffic Police have intensified their campaign against vehicles fitted with modified silencers, launching a state-wide crackdown to curb rising noise and environmental pollution.

Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Kanta Jangir said on Monday that regular inspection drives are being conducted across key locations, and strict legal action is being taken against violators. "We have undertaken a special drive on a regular basis. After obtaining court per-

mission, around 410 modified bike silencers have been destroyed," SP Jangir informed.

She noted that such modifications not only breach traffic regulations but also pose serious threats to public health and peace. "Many riders use these silencers, especially during early morning and evening hours, creating nuisance in residential areas. We urge young riders to think twice before installing them," she said.

The SP cautioned that offenders could face bike seizure, a fine of 10,000, imprisonment, and even suspension of their driving licence under existing traffic laws.

Reaffirming the department's commitment to maintaining road discipline and protecting the environment, Jangir said the special enforcement drive will continue across all districts. "Our aim is to ensure a peaceful and responsible traffic culture in Tripura," she added.

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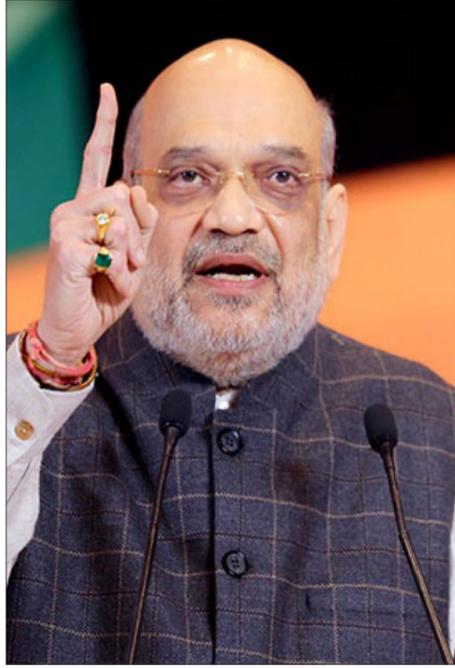
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## Opposition shielding infiltrators for vote bank politics: Shah



PATNA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah accused Opposition INDIA bloc, it of protecting infiltrators. He reaffirmed that the NDA government will drive out every infiltrator from the country and Bihar.

Winding up his campaign, Shah said, "Not long ago, Rahul Gandhi embarked on a major yatra. This yatra was to save the infiltrators."

Rahul can undertake as many as yatras he wants, from Patna to Italy, but he won't be able to save the

infiltrators." Accusing Rahul Gandhi and RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav of being more concerned about infiltrators from Bangladesh than Bihar's youth, Shah said Gandhi is trying to build a "corridor for infiltrators" while PM Narendra Modi is trying to develop an industrial corridor in Bihar.

He said the Opposition's vote bank politics has led them to make attempts for building a 'ghuspaithiya' (infiltrator) corridor, unlike Narendra Modi, who is setting up an industrial corridor. "People of Bihar

will never allow infiltrators to derive benefits of welfare schemes," he asserted.

Referring to Operation Sindoor, Shah said when the Congress-led alliance was in power at the Centre, "terrorists struck at will on our soil". "In contrast, now we are beating up the terrorists inside their homes," he said.

"In future, if terrorists from Pakistan dare to carry out an attack again, bullets fired by them will be retaliated with mortar shells. Do you know where these mortar shells will be manufactured? In Bihar, in Sasaram, as Modi is trying to build a defence corridor here," he added.

Taking a jibe at Sonia Gandhi's Italian roots, Shah said, "Press the EVM button in favour of NDA candidates with such force that it sends shock waves as far as Italy."

Reacting to Opposition's CM face Tejashwi and RJD chief Lalu Prasad, he said PM Modi could not 'in seven births' match the level of corruption allegedly committed by RJD leaders.

Shah addressed rallies in Sasaram and Arwal and appealed to voters to extend their support to NDA candidates to prevent return of 'jungle raj' in Bihar again.

The Assam government on Sunday resumed its eviction drive against illegal settlers on forest land. The drive, carried out in some eastern, western and northern districts of the state earlier, had been halted in the aftermath of music icon Zubeen Garg's death in Singapore.

NEW DELHI

As the Jammu and Kashmir Police recovered IED-making material and ammunition from Haryana's Faridabad on Monday, Commissioner of Police Satender Kumar Gupta detailed the joint operation involving the J&K Police and Haryana Police.

"It is an ongoing joint operation between Haryana police and J&K police. An accused, Dr Muzammil, was nabbed. 360 kg of inflammable material was recovered yesterday, which is possibly ammonium nitrate. It is not RDX... The operation is still underway," he said.

Furthermore, he elaborated on the recovered arms and ammunition, including pistols, live cartridges, timers, batteries, walkie-talkie sets, heavy metal, and more.

"One assault rifle with 3 magazines and 83 live rounds, one pistol with 8 live rounds, two empty cartridges, two additional magazines, 8 large suitcases, 4 small suitcases and a bucket from which approx 360 kgs of inflammable material has been recovered. It is suspected to be ammonium nitrate. Twenty timers with batteries, 24 remotes, approximately 5 kg of heavy metal, walkie-talkie sets, electric wiring, batteries, and other contraband materials have been recovered. It is not RDX... It is not an AK-47; it is an assault rifle. It is like an AK-47 but slightly smaller than it. But it is not AK-47..." Faridabad CP Satender Kumar stated.

The arrested accused was a physician at the Al-Falah University in Faridabad, Haryana.

CP Gupta said, "This joint operation has been going on for fifteen days... Two accused persons have been booked until now, including Dr Muzammil from Faridabad, and another accused, Aadil Rather, has been arrested from J&K's Saharanpur."

Aadil Rather was detained after an AK-47 rifle was recovered from his locker at the Government

Medical College (GMC) by Srinagar



Medical College (GMC) by Srinagar Police, with the assistance of Joint Interrogation Centre (JIC) Anantnag. According to Police sources, it was Aadil Rather's confession that led to the arrest of De Muzammil and the recovery of the large amount of explosives.

Earlier on Sunday, continuing its sustained efforts to uproot the terror ecosystem from the grassroots level, Kulgam Police launched a massive crackdown across multiple locations in the district.

The operation targeted Overground workers (OGWs), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Public Safety Act (PSA) accused persons, sympathisers, and relatives of killed and active terrorists, particularly in areas where encounters had earlier taken place.

During the operation, several

suspects were detained for questioning, and multiple houses were searched. The action forms part of Kulgam Police's Zero-Tolerance Policy towards terrorism and its support network.

It is pertinent to mention that earlier, Kulgam Police had initiated strong action against J-K Nationals Operating from Pak/PoK (JKNOPs) and SIM card vendors facilitating terror communication channels.

On November 8, in a major operation aimed at dismantling the ecosystem of terror and subversive activities in the district, Kulgam Police on Saturday launched a massive crackdown on J&K Nationals Operating from Pakistan/Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK).

Acting on specific intelligence inputs, multiple Cordon and Search Operations (CASOs) were carried

out in several parts of the district, targeting individuals involved in facilitating, funding, and promoting terror activities at the behest of their relatives currently based across the border.

During the operation, several relatives and associates of active JKNOP members were arrested under relevant provisions of law for their continued involvement in anti-national activities, including logistical support, propaganda distribution, and aiding recruitment. Digital devices and incriminating materials were also seized during the raids.

Kulgam Police has reiterated its commitment to uphold peace and security in the district, stating that operations against the terror support network will continue to ensure its complete dismantling.

## INTERNATIONAL

### US facing headwinds in convincing Zelenskyy, NATO allies, ready to meet Rubio: Russian FM Lavrov

MOSCOW

The US seems to be facing headwinds in persuading Kyiv and NATO allies not to interfere in its efforts towards settling the Ukraine crisis, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Sunday.

Lavrov said he is ready to meet US Secretary of State Marco Rubio but maintained that ending the conflict is impossible without taking Russian interests into account and eradicating its root causes.

Lavrov's comments came weeks after unsuccessful efforts for a summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Donald Trump, as a follow up of the talks between the two leaders at Anchorage in Alaska on August 15 where they had not reached a deal to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The Americans assured us back then (Alaska summit) that they would be able to ensure that Zelenskyy would not impede the achievement of peace.

Apparently, certain difficulties have arisen on this issue, Lavrov said in an interview with state news agency RIA Novosti.

"Furthermore, as far as we know, Brussels and London are trying to persuade Washington to abandon its intention to resolve the crisis through political and diplomatic means and fully engage in efforts to exert military pressure on Russia, that is, to finally become part of the 'war party'," he said.

Lavrov also underscored that despite the compromise reached at the summit in Anchorage, Moscow is firm on its fundamental principles: Russia's territorial integrity and the choice of the residents of Crimea, Donbass, and Novorossiia are not negotiable.

"We are now awaiting confirmation from the United States that the Anchorage agreements remain in force," Lavrov added.

Putin has repeatedly stated that Russia advocates exclusively for a long-term settlement without any temporary



ceasefires and that achieving such a settlement is possible only after addressing the root causes of the conflict.

The root causes he identifies include the threats to Russia's national security arising from NATO expansion and the oppression of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine.

Lavrov had talked to his US counterpart Marco Rubio on October 20 to prepare for the Budapest summit between Putin and Trump, which was reportedly cancelled due to Moscow's rigid stand for seeking a political settlement before a ceasefire.

The Russian foreign minister also said he was in regular contact with his US counterpart Marco Rubio and he is ready to meet in person to resolve irritants in bilateral US-Russian relations accumulated since the earlier administrations of Barack Obama and Joe Biden.

A regular communication between him and Rubio was essential for discussing the Ukraine issue and advancing bilateral agenda, he added.

"There are many irritants in Russian-American relations, inherited from the previous US administration. It will take a long time to clear up the

mess," Lavrov said.

With the arrival of the new administration, we sensed a willingness to resume dialogue.

It is underway, but not as quickly as we would have liked.

The agency interview was published amid Western media speculations about the 75-year-old Putin loyalist having fallen from favour with his boss over the cancellation of the proposed Budapest summit.

Two rounds of consultations were held in the spring, and a number of agreements were reached to improve the functioning of diplomatic missions.

"For our part, we believe it is important to go beyond the diplomatic missions within this dialogue," he said.

In the long-winding interview, Lavrov said Russia and the US must address issues such as establishing direct air service and returning Russian diplomatic property illegally seized by Barack Obama in December 2016, three weeks before Donald Trump's first inauguration.

"Michael Flynn, the then nominee for national security adviser, called our ambassador and, on behalf of the

future US president, asked him not to react harshly to the provocations of the outgoing Democratic administration," Lavrov claimed and added, Flynn said, "When we move into the White House, we'll sort everything out." For now, we're waiting.

Our proposals regarding both diplomatic real estate and air travel have been conveyed to the American side, the Russian minister said.

Responding to a question about the Trump administration's readiness to de jure recognise Crimea as Russian territory as part of the peace plan, Lavrov said: "For obvious reasons, we don't disclose all the details of our discussions with the American side on the Ukrainian issue, although when the media leaks outright fake news, we naturally comment accordingly."

"Let me reiterate that, in our view, ending the conflict is impossible without taking Russian interests into account and eradicating its root causes," he asserted.

Responding to the question about EU plans to seize Russian assets to provide loans to Ukraine, Lavrov said: "Such actions constitute outright deception and robbery."

Apparently, the long-held instincts of colonisers and pirates have awakened within Europeans.

No matter how the scheme for extorting Russian money is orchestrated, there is no legal way to do it.

"Russia will respond appropriately to any predatory actions in accordance with the principle of reciprocity, based on national interests and the need to compensate for the damage caused to us," Lavrov warned and expressed hope that Brussels and other Western capitals may yet come to their senses and abandon the planned misadventure.

The Russian Army, meanwhile, is advancing to capture strategic towns of Pokrovsk (Krasnoarmeisk) and Kupyansk where in pincer movements more than 10,000 Ukrainian troops along with NATO advisers are blocked.

### US airlines cancel more than 2,500 weekend flights largely due to government shutdown

WASHINGTON

U.S. airlines canceled more than 2,500 weekend flights by Saturday evening as the Federal Aviation Administration's mandate to reduce air traffic because of the government shutdown showed no signs of easing.

The slowdown at many of the nation's busiest airports did not cause immediate widespread disruptions. But it deepened the impact felt by the nation's longest federal shutdown.

"We all travel. We all have somewhere to be," said Emmy Holguin, 36, who was flying from Miami to see family in the Dominican Republic. "I'm hoping that the government can take care of this."

Analysts warn that the upheaval will intensify and spread far beyond air travel if cancellations keep growing and reach into Thanksgiving week.

Already there are concerns about the squeeze on tourism destinations and holiday shipping.

Here's what to know about the flight reductions:

How many flights have been canceled?

Cancellations jumped Saturday — typically a slow travel day — to more than 1,500, following just over 1,000 the previous day, according to the tracking website FlightAware.

By the evening U.S. airlines already had canceled another 1,000-plus for Sunday.

Airports in Atlanta and Chicago, as well as Charlotte, North Carolina, and Newark, New Jersey, saw numerous disruptions throughout the day. Ongoing staffing shortages in radar centers and control towers added to the cancellations and delays at several East Coast airports, including those around New York City.

Not all the cancellations were due to the FAA order,

and those numbers represented just a small portion of the overall flights nationwide. But they are certain to rise in the coming days if the slowdown continues.

The FAA said the reductions impacting all commercial airlines started at 4% of flights at 40 targeted airports and will be bumped up again Tuesday before hitting 10% on Friday.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy warned this week that even more cuts might be needed if the shutdown continues and more air traffic controllers are off the job.

Travelers wait at LaGuardia International Airport in New York.

Why are the flights being canceled?

Controllers have gone without paychecks for nearly a month during the shutdown, leading many to call in sick and compound previously existing staffing shortages.

Most are working mandatory overtime six days a week during without pay, and some are taking second jobs to pay their bills, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association has said.

On Saturday the union said it had delivered 1,600 handwritten letters from members to Congress calling for the shutdown to end.

Most were relieved to find that airlines largely stayed on schedule Friday, and those whose flights were called off were able to quickly rebook. So far, longer international flights have not been interrupted.

There is still a lot of uncertainty about which flights will be canceled next.

And not everyone has the means to pay for a hotel or deal with a last-minute disruption, said Heather Xu, 46, who was in Miami on Saturday after a cruise and flying home to Puerto Rico.

"Travel is stressful enough. Then you put these disruptions in place, and it really makes everything more challenging," she said.

Rental car companies reported a sharp increase in one-way reservations Friday, and some people simply canceled flights altogether.

Diana Alvear of Bridgewater, New Jersey, scratched her family's trip next weekend to see in-laws in California because of concerns about flying when controllers are working long hours and understaffed.

She also was nervous about being stranded, which would be "a huge debacle" for work. United Airlines gave her credit for the airfare, but the family is still out nearly \$700 for the deposit on an Airbnb.

"This has been costly to us, and it's a huge disappointment for us and our family," Alvear said. "It's really weighing on our hearts that we had to do this."

What could be the impacts beyond air travel?

First there is the potential for higher prices in stores, as nearly half of U.S. air freight is shipped in the bellies of passenger aircraft.

Major flight disruptions could bring higher shipping costs that get passed on to consumers, said Patrick Penfield, professor of supply chain practice at Syracuse University.

Further losses will ripple through the economy if the shutdown continues, from tourism to manufacturing, said Greg Raiff, CEO of Elevate Aviation Group. "This shutdown is going to impact everything from cargo aircraft to people getting to business meetings to tourists being able to travel," Raiff said. "It's going to hit the hotel taxes and city taxes. There's a cascading effect that results from this thing."

## Nagaland University study unlocks Medicinal secrets of endangered plant species called *Goniothalamus simonsii*

Undertaken jointly with Assam Down Town University, this is the first-ever scientific investigation to validate the traditional medicinal claims of a rare Meghalaya plant used by local communities for generations



LUMAMI, NAGALAND.

Nagaland University researchers have partnered with Assam Down Town University to carry out the first comprehensive scientific study on *Goniothalamus simonsii* Hook. f. Thoms., an endangered and endemic medicinal plant found in Meghalaya's forests.

Long used by indigenous communities to treat gastrointestinal complications, throat irritation, typhoid fever, and malaria, this plant had never before been studied for its scientific or pharmacological potential.

The study provides scientific validation for the plant's traditional use and reveals that *G. simonsii* is a rich source of bioactive phytochemicals with potent antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anticancer activities. Using advanced analytical tools and computational modelling, the team demonstrated how natural compounds from this species interact with cancer-related proteins, offering valuable leads for the development of new, nature-based therapeutic drugs.

The Research was led by Dr. Mayur Mausoom Phukan, faculty, Nagaland University, with this Student Mr. Samson Rosly Sangma. The findings were published during October 2025 in Chemistry and Biodiversity (<https://doi.org/10.1002/cbdv.202501513>), a peer-reviewed journal publishing research on the chemical aspects of biological diversity, including natural products, chemical ecology, and molecular studies of living organisms.

The paper was co-authored by Mr. Samson Rosly Sangma, Research Scholar; Dr. Mayur Mausoom Phukan, Assistant Professor, Department of Forestry, Nagaland University; Dr. Dhrubajyoti Gogoi, Assistant Professor, Department of Biotechnology, Assam Down Town University; Dr. Pranay Punj Pankaj, Associate Professor, Department of Zoology, Nagaland University; and Ms. Vahshi Chongloi, Research Scholar, Department of Forestry, Nagaland University.

Speaking about this research, Prof. Jagadish K Patnaik, Vice Chancellor, Nagaland University, said, "Nagaland University, in collaboration with Assam Down Town University, have undertaken the first comprehensive scientific study on *Goniothalamus simonsii* Hook. f. Thoms., an endangered and endemic medicinal plant native to the forests of Meghalaya. Through this study, our researchers are not only contributing to the conservation and understanding of a rare plant species but are also helping to bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern science."

Prof. Jagadish K Patnaik added, "I commend the research team for their dedication and innovative approach, and I am confident that this work will open new pathways for sustainable utilization of our rich biodiversity. Nagaland University remains committed to promoting excellence in research and fostering collaborations that contribute to the scientific, cultural, and ecological advancement of the region."



A popular Norwegian adage says, "There's no bad weather, just bad clothing choices."

Elaborat-

ing on this research, Dr. Mayur Mausoom Phukan, Assistant Professor, Department of Forestry, Nagaland University, said, "This study bridges traditional knowledge with modern science at a crucial time when antibiotic resistance, chronic illnesses, and the side effects of synthetic drugs continue to strain healthcare systems. Our findings reaffirm that India's rich biodiversity holds untapped potential for modern drug discovery. *Goniothalamus simonsii* not only offers pharmacological promise but also underscores the urgent need to conserve such endangered species."

The study identified multiple bioactive compounds that exhibit promising biological properties, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, antimicrobial, and anticancer effects. Notably, extracts from different parts of *G. simonsii* showed strong antiproliferative activity against colon cancer cells in laboratory tests, suggesting its potential as a natural source of anti-cancer agents.

Highlighting the unique aspects of this research, Mr. Samson Rosly Sangma, Research Scholar, Department of Forestry, Nagaland University, said, "What makes this research particularly significant is that *Goniothalamus simonsii* is an exceptionally rare species, with its population declining alarmingly and now confined to only a few natural habitats. This decline is largely attributed to the limited awareness of its medicinal importance among local communities. Listed as 'Endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), this remarkable plant now faces an urgent need for focused conservation efforts. By generating robust scientific data, we hope that our work will encourage conservation and cultivation initiatives for this rare plant, ensuring its sustainable use and protection in the wild."

Beyond its immediate medicinal implications, this study represents a model for how traditional ethnomedicinal knowledge can be combined with modern biotechnological and computational methods to unlock new possibilities for drug discovery.

It also reflects India's growing emphasis on using indigenous biodiversity as a foundation for affordable, accessible healthcare innovations.

Moving forward, the researchers plan to conduct in vivo and clinical studies to validate these findings further and explore the plant's potential as a component of future phytopharmaceutical formulations. This research reinforces the connection between traditional wisdom, biodiversity, and sustainable health solutions.

This landmark research positions Nagaland University at the forefront of efforts to scientifically validate India's indigenous medicinal heritage, reinforcing the Northeast's role as a vital center for biodiversity-based innovation and conservation.

**ABOUT NAGALAND UNIVERSITY:** Nagaland University, the 13th Central University and the only Central University in Nagaland, was established based on the Act of Parliament of India and received the assent of the President of India on 20th October 1989 as The Nagaland University Act 1989. The University came into being on September 6, 1994, having jurisdiction over the entire state of Nagaland.



Nagaland University registered a significant improvement in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025, securing a place in the 151-200 rank band.

At present, the University has three campuses, viz. (i) Headquarters at Lumami in Zunheboto district (ii) Kohima Campus at Meriema in Kohima district (iii) Medziphema Campus (School of

Agricultural Sciences) at Medziphema in Dimapur district.

There are 43 departments offering Undergraduate, Postgraduate and PhD programmes in different disciplines of Arts, Commerce, Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Engineering & Technology and Management streams. There are 76 colleges from all over the state of Nagaland currently affiliated with Nagaland University.

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#### VOLUNTEERS REGISTERS @ NEIR 2026

We are looking for volunteers across NE & West Bengal Interested candidates (College students, youths) can register at [https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer\\_Registration.aspx](https://northeastintegrationrally.in/Volunteer_Registration.aspx), send an email: [neintegrationrally@gmail.com](mailto:neintegrationrally@gmail.com)

#### BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Business establishments, educational institutions, individual service providers etc. can enlist themselves or advertise their products or services at the most reasonable cost in InfoCom Diary. Send your details to [InfoComSolutions@krctimes.com](mailto:InfoComSolutions@krctimes.com). Submit Here: <https://bit.ly/InfoComDiaryForm>

#### STUDENTS' INTERNSHIP

Students can apply for a three-months internship with KRC Foundation. During the internship the student can get an opportunity to work on a live project. On successful completion the student is awarded a certificate. Apply to 5E for Success: [5eforsuccess@gmail.com](mailto:5eforsuccess@gmail.com). For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/krctimesinternship> or [www.krctimes.com/products-services/training-development-5e-for-success/internship](http://www.krctimes.com/products-services/training-development-5e-for-success/internship)

#### NE INDIA WRITING STAR CONTEST

Participate in NE India Writing Star Contest and get your writings published. Eligibility: From Class VI onwards. Each participant receives a digital participation certificate. Send articles at: [info@krctimes.com](mailto:info@krctimes.com). For Details Visit: <https://bit.ly/NEIndiaWritingStarContest> [www.krctimes.com/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest](http://www.krctimes.com/campaigns-csr/ne-india-writing-star-contest)

#### CONNECT@ KRC TIMES



#### KRC TIMES

To engage with KRC TIMES, please use the following e-mails and WhatsApp Nos: For News: [krctimes@gmail.com](mailto:krctimes@gmail.com) / WP: 8721838313 For Advertisement: [info@krctimes.com](mailto:info@krctimes.com) / WP: 9330830083 For Subscription: [krctimes@gmail.com](mailto:krctimes@gmail.com) / WP: 8721838313 Editor: [biswadeep.gupta@gmail.com](mailto:biswadeep.gupta@gmail.com) / WP: 8721838313



## Cultural Partner, NEIR 2026



[www.northeastintegrationrally.in](http://www.northeastintegrationrally.in)



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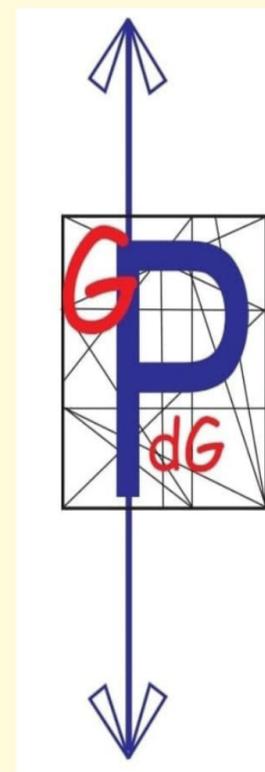
## Media partner, NEIR 2026



[www.northeastintegrationrally.in](http://www.northeastintegrationrally.in)



## Partner, NEIR 2026



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## BARAK FESTIVAL

JANUARY 10-12, 2025

ACTIVITY PROGRAM





**10 JAN**  
**NE Cultural Fest**  
 Any Form of Art and Cultural showcase can be showcased here. The Top performances will be invited to perform in the Main Event. Schools, College, University Department, Individual & Group Competition.



**11 JAN**  
**Adventure Sports**  
 Trekking & Canoe, Obstacle Navigation, Sport Climbing, Disaster Management Technique, Water Sports.



**11 JAN**  
**Barak Valley Conclave**  
 Potential, Issues and Challenges of Barak Valley by different youth organizations. Includes KOCs, and D groups and can register for participation. Registration fee is 5000/- and participation fee is 10000/-.



**12 JAN**  
**River-Climate Conclave**  
 Climate Change will influence on Climate Change, pollution and river flooding. The Conclave will focus on the importance, technical and protection of River Barak. Training & Geography competitive and certification. River Barak, Climate Change.



**JAN'25**  
**Online Global Fest**  
 All can participate online and send a video clip on Poems, Songs and Dance Performances, Bengali, English, Hindi & Manipuri. Last Date: 31st December 2024.



**Barak Festival**  
 Adventure Sports, Art & Culture Promotion



**11 JAN**  
**5E For Success Conclave**  
 The 4th 5E Success Conclave is going to be held on the theme: "From School to Campus to Corporate". Schools, Educational Institutions and corporate houses can join the Conclave as sponsors.



**10 JAN**  
**Media Conclave**  
 Media Conclave: Media Conclave, Workshops, and the Fund, Talks and Conferences are part of the "Barak Festival 2025". Theme: "One for All, All for One".



**Barak Festival 2025**  
 PAINTING CARNIVAL  
 NE CULTURAL FEST  
 E-SPORTS

**10-12 JAN**  
**Science Studio**  
 Real a glimpse of Science to its new heights. Class VI-XI | Teachers | Seniors, Administrators | Parents. Raw science out of textbooks into real-life experiences of students.

**DEC'24-JAN'25**  
**Photography**  
 Online Photography Contest: River Barak | NE India | Art & Culture of NE | NE Culture. Real-Time Photography Contest of "Barak Festival 2025".

**Barak Festival**  
 Band Night | 10 JAN  
 Musical Night | 11 JAN

**10-12 JAN**  
**E-Sports**  
 Full-Blown Demos | CASH PRIZES | Trophy



**11 JAN**  
**film festival**  
 Award-Giving Ceremony | Film from Manipur. Short Films from Barak Valley, NE India, Ws. Media Talk | Exhibitions | Meet & Greet.



**Barak Festival 2025**  
 STUDENT INTERNSHIP  
 Discover valuable experience and learn more about the Industry.

**10-12 JAN**  
**Book Bank**  
 #NoLike Campaign | Book Bank | 1000 books | 10000/-

**Book Club**  
 Meet Authors, Publishers, Read & Discuss, Buy and Sell Books

**Painting Carnival**  
 Water Colour and Oil and Saw Paper Campaign





**5E SUCCESS**  
**STUDENT INTERNSHIP**  
 Discover valuable experience and learn more about the Industry.